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March 26, 2019

The Honorable Suzan DelBene
House of Representatives
2330 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Reed
House of Representatives
2263 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative DelBene and Representative Reed:

On behalf of AARP and its nearly 38 million members in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories, we are pleased to support the *Mental Health Telemedicine Expansion Act* (H.R. 1301), which would make it easier for Medicare beneficiaries to receive mental health care. AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps empower people to choose how they live as they age, strengthens communities, and fights for the issues that matter most to families, such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

Your bill would allow Medicare beneficiaries to receive mental health treatment via telehealth by removing the originating site requirements for certain services. AARP believes mental health is a fundamental component of overall health. Mental illness affects people of all ages and incomes and can be as debilitating as any other major medical illness. Roughly one in five older Americans has a mental disorder, and as the Medicare population grows, the number of people seeking treatment will grow. This population is inadequately served by our health care system. Your bill improves access to care by making it easier for people who may not live near a mental health professional to get the support they need.

AARP appreciates your bipartisan leadership to help improve mental health services for Medicare beneficiaries. We look forward to working with you on this and other issues important to older Americans. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or have your staff contact Andrew Scholnick of our Government Affairs staff at 202-434-3770 or ascholnick@aarp.org.

Sincerely,

David Certner
Legislative Counsel and Legislative Policy Director
Government Affairs

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